

A

VINDICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES

OF

THE AUTHORS

OF

“THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.”

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BY THE

HON. & REV. A. P. PERCEVAL, B.C.L.

FORMERLY OF ORIEL,

NOW OF ALL SOULS' COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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“Refrain ~~not~~ to speak when there is occasion to do good.”

ECCLES. iv. 23.

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TO  
THE FRIENDS OF TRUTH AND PEACE,

I BEG LEAVE

AFFECTIONATELY TO DEDICATE

THESE PAGES.

EAST HORSLEY,  
MARCH 28, 1941.

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REV. C. W. SULLIVAN  
BRAMPTON

A

## VINDICATION,

&c.

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AMID the popular clamour directed against those connected with the "Tracts for the Times," it is hardly to be expected that a calm voice of appeal, proceeding from one of that body, will be allowed a patient hearing. Yet it seems right that such an appeal should be made, as well on account of all concerned on either side, as on account of the truth itself, for the security and defence of which, according to the best of their present judgment and belief, both the accused and their accusers have acted.

The crime laid to our charge is this, that we pay, and teach others to pay, a deference to the voice of the ancient Church, contrary to the principles of the Reformation, and inconsistent with our office as ministers of the Church of England.

Whether this be so or no, cannot be determined without a clear understanding both of our principles,

and of those of the Reformation on this head: on both which points much misunderstanding seems to prevail. For we are accused of placing the traditions of the primitive Church, as set forth in the writings of the divines of those times, on a footing of authority superior to that which we allow to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. I can only say, that I know of no writer in the English Communion who has attempted that, save one, and he most unintentionally, but that writer is no favourer of the Tracts, but one of their foremost opposers—I mean the late Warden of New College, Dr. Shuttleworth, who in his book entitled, “Not Tradition, but Scripture,” has involved himself in the very fault, which, without sufficient consideration, he had charged against us. He has set himself to overturn a scriptural truth, declared, or alleged to be declared, in sundry places of the inspired writings of St. Paul<sup>1</sup>, not by a critical examination of the texts alleged, or by a more extensive collation of other passages of Holy Writ, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, but by the sole force of the ecclesiastical tradition of Irenæus, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr. I have yet to learn that any one of the writers of the Tracts has followed his example.

These, I believe to be the principles common to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 15. *ibid.* iii. 6. 1 Tim. i. 3. 15. 18. ii. 11. iii. 1. iv. 9, 10. vi. 14. 20. 2 Tim. i. 14. ii. 2.

all who have been connected with the Tracts: if any one among them entertain others, I am wholly unconscious of the fact:

1. We believe that, by the over-ruling Providence of God, it hath been so ordered, that Holy Scripture does contain all things necessary for men either to believe or do in order to salvation.

2. We believe that He who has given us the Scriptures, has also, for the more effectually guarding the sacred truths to which they witness, provided assistance in the testimony of the Church from the beginning, as exhibited in the writings of the ancient Christians, wonderfully preserved and handed down: which testimony men are not at liberty to lay aside.

Hence we hold, that, in things necessary to salvation, whatever may be gathered from the Scriptures, and has been confirmed by the Church from the beginning, as necessary to be received or rejected; that every Christian is bound to receive or reject accordingly: but that no Christian man is to be urged to receive, as necessary to salvation, any apparent deductions from the text of Holy Writ, unless confirmed by the ancient Church: nor positions (if any such exist), maintained by the ancient Church, as necessary, without Scripture warrant. In things not necessary to salvation, we hold that the opinions and practices of the saints and martyrs of old, which have not been condemned in the Church, have a claim upon our reverence; and that that claim is increased in proportion as the testimony of the



ecclesiastical records affords ground for believing that they were received and observed from the beginning. But, at the same time, we hold that, in all matters of this kind, the rulers of the Church for the time being have authority to forbid or enjoin the observance of any such practices, to allow or to restrain the promulgation of such opinions, as they shall deem to tend most to edification.

Now, are these principles, or are they not, contrary to the principles of the Reformers, or in any respect forbidden by the Church of England? How shall we ascertain the principles of the Reformers? Shall it be by the expression of their individual opinions? Let us hear, then, Cranmer speaking:

“I protest that it was never in my mind to write, speak, or understand anything contrary to the most holy Word of God, or else against *the holy Catholic Church of Christ*, but purely and simply to imitate and teach *those things only* which I had learned of the Sacred Scripture, *and of the Catholic Church of Christ* from the beginning, and also *according to the exposition of the most holy and learned fathers and martyrs of the Church*. And if any thing, peradventure, hath chanced otherwise than I thought, I may err; but heretic I cannot be, forasmuch as I am ready *in all things* to follow the judgment of the most sacred Word of God, *and of the holy Catholic Church*.”  
—*Appeal to a General Council.*

Ridley speaks thus: “When I perceive the greatest part of Christianity to be infected with the poison



of the See of Rome, I repair to the usage *of the primitive Church.*"

Farrar, Hooper, Taylor, Philpot, Bradford, and Coverdale, speak thus: "We doubt not, by God's grace, but we shall be able to *prove* all our confession here to be *most true*, *by* the verity of God's word, *and consent of the Catholic Church.*"—*Confession at Oxford*, 1554.

Philpot still more plainly speaks thus, at his fourth examination:—"The Bishop of Gloucester asked him, "I pray you, by whom will you be judged in matters of controversy which happen daily?" Philpot answered, "By the Word of God, for Christ saith in St. John, the Word that He spake shall be judge in the latter day." The Bishop then asked him, "What if you take the Word one way, and I another way, who shall judge then?" Mark Philpot's answer: "THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH."

If the case, then, were to be decided by an appeal to the individual Reformers, it is clear that a judgment of acquittal must needs be pronounced: it thus appearing, that the appeal to the ancient Catholic Church, conjointly with, though subordinate to, the Scriptures, was maintained and practised by all the most eminent of those persons, who shed their blood to deliver us from Papal bondage, and from the corruption of Christian doctrines which were and are cherished by the See of Rome.

But it may be said, and truly, the individual opinions of men, however eminent, cannot set aside the

judgment of the Church to which they belong; and however much the Reformers whom you have quoted may have countenanced and approved, as individuals, the principles you have been maintaining, still, if the Church of England itself has decided contrary to them, you are still open to condemnation: we require, therefore, the decision of the Church itself upon this matter. I will not reply, as I might, that it is for our accusers to produce a decision of the Church depriving us of the liberty to maintain the principles I have stated: because I am prepared to contend, that, in maintaining these principles, we are not only not acting contrary to the decision of the Church, but are simply obeying the directions which she has given us. I, therefore, can have no reluctance to comply with the supposed demand of our accusers, how unreasonable soever it may be. I proceed, therefore, to quote the decision of the Church of England in the time of the Reformation upon the very point in dispute: the decision of the Bishops and Divines who adorned our Churches when she arose from the ashes of Queen Mary's fires: a decision pronounced in open synod, and propounded to the Clergy of the Church of England, and which, as it has never since been repealed or annulled, continues still to have force upon them. It was decreed in the Convocation of 1571, assembled under Archbishop Parker, and ratified by him: and I would suggest to those zealous individuals, who, out of respect to his memory, are collecting what

they are pleased to call the "Parker Library," to which I am a subscriber, that they would do well to place this decree in the title-page of every volume of their series: and to admit none into their Library, the contents of which are not in accordance with it. The decree is entitled, *De Concionatoribus*, and contains rules for the guidance of all preachers in the Church of England. The words which concern the point in dispute are as follows: "In the first place, they (the preachers) shall see that they *never teach any thing* for a discourse, which they wish to be *religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, AND WHAT THE CATHOLIC FATHERS AND ANCIENT BISHOPS have collected out of that same doctrine.*"

Nor is it only in the Canons of 1571 that we find this principle thus explicitly maintained; in the Canons of 1603, which are in every one's hands, and the last which our Church has been allowed her liberty to frame and receive, the same principle is repeatedly recognised. Thus in Canon 30: "We, following the royal steps of our most worthy king, because he therein followeth the rules of the *Scripture and the practice of the Primitive Church*, do commend to all the true members of the Church of England these our directions and observations following." "The use of the sign of the Cross was held *by the Primitive Church*, as well by the Greeks as the Latins, with one consent and applause," "*following therein the primitive and Apostolical Churches:*"

“those true rules of doctrine concerning things indifferent, which are consonant to the Word of God, *and the judgment of the ancient Fathers.*” Canon 31: “Forasmuch as *the ancient Fathers of the Church*, led by example of the Apostles, appointed prayers and fasts to be used at the solemn ordering of Ministers, . . . . *we following their holy and religious example*, do constitute. Canon 32: “The office of Deacon being a step or degree to the Ministry, *according to the judgment of the ancient Fathers, and the practice of the primitive Church*, we do ordain, &c.” Canon 33: “It hath been long since *provided by many decrees of the ancient Fathers*, that none should be admitted either Deacon or Priest, who had not some certain place where he might use his function. According to which example we do ordain,” &c.

It appears, then, that both in matters of doctrine and discipline, it has ever been the avowed intention of the Church of England to seek guidance and direction from the ancient Church, and not from the Scriptures only: that her Reformation was based on this very principle, and the use of it enjoined to all her ministers, who are cautioned against trusting to their own private judgments in gathering doctrine for the instruction of their people from the sacred text, and directed to correct their private judgment by “the catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops.”

If more proof is wanted, I can adduce it in abundance, by citing the Book of Homilies, prepared by the Reformers in the reigns of Edward VI. and



Queen Elizabeth, for the instruction of all classes of the people; recommended by our Articles to this day as fit for that purpose; and to a general approval of which, every member of the university of Oxford, every graduate of Cambridge, and every bishop, priest, and deacon in the Church of England, is pledged by the subscription of his own hand. If there be one feature throughout the whole of the Homilies more remarkable than another, it is the exhibition of that very principle of deference to the ancient Church, for the maintenance of which so much reproach has been heaped upon our heads. In this moderately-sized volume of sermons we find Ambrose, and Anselm, and Athanasius, and Arnobius, and Augustine, and Basil, and Bede, and Bernard, and Boniface, and Chrysostom, and Clemens, and Cyprian, and Cyril, and Damascene, and Dionysius, and Epiphanius, and Eusebius, and Eusebius of Emissa, and Eutropius, and Fulgentius, and Gregory, and Hilary, and Ignatius, and Irenæus, and Jerome, and Isidore, and Justin, and Lactantius, and Origen, and Cæcumenius, and Optatus, and Prosper, and Paulus Diaconus, and Photius, and Serenus, and Theophylact, and Tertullian, and Zephyrus, and Zephyrinus, and others, quoted with a frequency of which we have no parallel in these times. I have noted forty citations from Augustine only. The terms in which they are spoken of are no less remarkable than the frequency of the citations. "The great clerk and godly preacher;" "the learned and godly doctor;"

“a godly father;” “the holy fathers and doctors;” and expressions of the same kind, meet us at every turn. Nor is this all: they are cited as persons, to whose testimony, judgment, and decision, the very greatest deference is due:—“St. Augustine, a doctor of great authority and also antiquity, hath this opinion:” “You see that the authority both of the Scripture and also of Augustine;” “It is already proved, both by the Scriptures and by the authority of Augustine;” “To know which they be, St. Augustine teacheth us;” “Ye have heard how earnestly both the apostles, prophets, holy fathers, and doctors, do exhort us;” “If the wholesome counsel of godly fathers or the love of Christ may move us;” “Being warned by his holy Word, and by the writings of old godly doctors and ecclesiastical histories;” and so throughout. The appeal for the truth of Christian doctrine is uniformly made, not to the Scriptures only, but to the Scriptures corroborated by the Fathers; of which I will add only one more instance,—that, namely, in which we are instructed how to ascertain the truth concerning the celebration of the Lord’s supper. “But, *before all other things*, this we must be sure of *especially*, that this supper be in such wise done and ministered, as our Lord and Saviour did and commanded to be done, as his holy Apostles used it, and *the good fathers of the primitive Church frequented it.*”

We may safely ask, in what instance have the writers of the Tracts required greater deference to be

paid to the Fathers, than the whole Church of England is here taught to pay in the very Homilies provided by the Reformers? Nor will it avail any to say, when pressed by these arguments, that indeed they must admit that the primitive Church has some claim upon our attention; but that they understand by that term only the Church of the first two or three centuries; whereas we receive it much more largely. For, if they will consult the Homilies, they will find the Reformers instructing the clergy to teach the people, as *beyond all doubt*, that for almost 700 years the Church was most pure, and that the six general councils held during that time were allowed and received of all men.

As far, then, as our principles are concerned, I think we need no longer fear reproach from any from whom it would be painful to receive it. But then comes the question of the application of those principles, in all the various points of detail which have been mooted in the Tracts. It will be said, however unexceptionable the principles you maintain may be, still you must admit it to be possible that you may have erred in the application of them. I not only admit it to be at once both possible and probable, but can have no hesitation in repeating what I have already felt myself under the painful necessity of publishing to the world, that, as far as my own judgment enables me to speak, this misapplication has taken effect in more than one instance. So far as this: that some of the writers of the Tracts,



not content with claiming to themselves and exercising that liberty which the Church of England has allowed her children, of entertaining and cherishing any of the pious opinions or practices which obtained in the ancient Church, and which she has not felt it necessary to forbid, have urged those opinions and practices upon others as things which *ought* to be held; thus seemingly invading in others that liberty which they so justly prize for themselves. But then I submit to the judgment of all impartial men, that the misapplication of principles, by individuals holding them, affords no just ground for reproaching the principles themselves, nor the body in general who hold those principles, and do not concur in the (supposed) misapplication of them. Nor do I believe that any considerate persons would have thought that there was any cause for such reproach in the present instance, if it had not been for the anonymous way in which the Tracts have been issued: a mistaken course, I must needs think, but concerning which I will do no more, than express, thus publicly, my earnest hope, that it may henceforth be discontinued.

With respect to the Tract 90, I must confess that I do not see how any member of the Church of England can be blamed for doing what Mr. Newman has there attempted to do, namely, to give to the Articles of the Church of England that interpretation which shall render them most in accordance with that principle of deference to the primitive Church of

the first seven centuries, which, in subordination to the Scriptures, the Church has laid down for the standard of teaching to be observed by all the clergy. It seems to me, that for any member of the Church of England to go about to condemn opinions and practices received and approved in those ages of the Church, which the Reformers counted "most pure," and by "those godly Fathers," to whose instructions our rules direct us to have recourse; and without whose approval Cranmer desired to teach nothing; is neither more nor less than to fly in the face of the Reformers, to cast aside the very fundamental principles of the English Reformation, and to violate the express rules of the Church. If in any instances it can be shown that the strict letter of the Articles is necessarily and absolutely condemnatory of any such opinions and practices, we are bound, in charity to the Reformers, to suppose that this was most unintentional on their parts, and for ourselves must confess that we are placed in a situation of very perplexing difficulty: from which, whether the best way would be to do violence to their Articles for the integrity of their principles, or to do violence to their principles for the sake of abiding by what one must needs consider a mere oversight or error on their part in framing the Articles, is so nice a point of casuistry, that I will say no more than that I see not why a man should be blamed who thinks the latter the greater evil of the two.

But this being so, is it not, I would ask, an act of

piety towards the Reformers, and of charity and duty to the whole Church of England, more especially to all who are required to subscribe the Articles, to endeavour to show that the Reformers have been guilty of no such inconsistency, and that we are under no necessity of making so difficult a choice? This, as the whole Tract declares, is all that Mr. Newman has attempted. In whatever instances he has succeeded, he deserves the thanks of every one who reveres the memory of the Reformers, or values the character of the Church of England. In whatever instances men shall succeed in showing that this cannot be done, they will only have the unenviable satisfaction of proving that the Reformers were inconsistent, and ourselves involved in difficulty.

This being my present view of the subject, there can be no need for me to enter into the details of the Tract. There are many things in it which I do not understand: some which I disapprove, perhaps from not understanding them: some statements advanced, which I think cannot be maintained: some conclusions drawn, which seem unwarranted by the premises. But as to the main object aimed at by the Tract, I must repeat that I think it deserves the commendation of every member of the Church of England.

I own, at the first I doubted very much whether the time for the promulgation of it was well chosen; but I know not how even this objection can, upon consideration, be maintained: for, seeing we are every day apparently drawing into closer contest with those

who uphold the Roman corruptions, it must needs be of great moment for those who are to engage on our side to know, more distinctly than seems generally understood, what those points are which we are under actual obligation to maintain against them: and not leave them under the dangerous impression of having to prove the condemnation of things which the Church of England never did condemn, and which she could not have condemned without violation of those great principles on which our Reformation was founded; but which, from the slip-slop way in which the Articles seem of late to have been received, many individuals have thought themselves under the necessity of at least attempting to condemn. The cause of truth itself, and of charity, both towards our own members, and those of the other side, not only justified, but required such an undertaking.

It seems to me, that the commander of a city, who, upon the approach of an enemy's besieging army, levels the citizens' boxes, which in time of peace they had built around it, lest the enemy should effect a lodgment by means of them, and the strength of the garrison be wasted in vain attempts to defend untenable positions, might with as much reason be accused of treason, as we, who, precisely upon the same principles, have ventured to reject those fanciful additions to the Articles of the Church of England, which were not contemplated by her Reformers, and can serve no other purpose but that of embarrassing her defenders, if attempted to be maintained against the keen assailants with whom we have to do.



Before quitting the Tract, it may perhaps be expected that I should state whether I justify what Mr. Sewell, in his letter to Dr. Pusey, p. 4, calls "the disparaging language in which the Articles appear to be spoken of—the representation of them as a bondage, rather than a safeguard." I answer that, for my own part, I must needs regard them in both lights—at once a safeguard and a bondage. That they have upon the whole acted as a most important safeguard, I would freely own: but I see not how it is possible to deny that they are a bondage, and a heavy one. At least, if a barrier to the entrance to the Christian priesthood, unknown to the Church for fifteen centuries and a half, and (unless I am mistaken) excluding from clerical communion the whole of the rest of Christendom, be not a bondage, I know not what the meaning of that term is. Let it not be supposed that I use these as words of censure: desperate diseases require desperate remedies. Situated as our Reformers were, I am not prepared to contend that they could have done better: in the body ecclesiastic as well as politic it may be often necessary to purchase safety by surrendering somewhat of liberty; and I am far from denying that the advantages of the safeguard furnished by the Articles, may have far outweighed the disadvantage of their bondage: but this at least must be said of them, that they were witnesses, by their institution, of the evil of the days which rendered their institution apparently necessary; and so long as they are necessarily continued, are witnesses of the continu-

ance of the same. The bondage, I conceive, would be undeniable, even were the strict meaning of the Articles more obvious than it is; but it is much increased by their being, in some instances, expressed in terms which at first seem contrary to the truth, and require to be very carefully and strictly weighed, before they can be reconciled to it. I will point out two instances of this, which I the rather do, because I hope to afford a more satisfactory solution of the difficulties which they present, than that which Mr. Newman has suggested.

The first is in Article 6, where, in explanation of the term Holy Scripture, it is said, "In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." I confess that when, in pursuing my theological studies, I found that there had been for a long time in the Church very great doubts as to the authority of some of the books in our New Testament, I was perfectly staggered. Nor did the solution which some of the commentators have suggested, and which Mr. Newman has adopted, afford any satisfaction to my mind. His exposition is as follows: "Here it is not meant that there never was any doubt in *portions* of the Church or *particular* Churches concerning certain books, which the Article includes in the Canon; for some of them, as, for instance, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse, have been the subject of much doubt in the West or East, as the case may be. But the Article asserts

that there has been no doubt about them in the Church catholic; that is, at the very first time that the catholic or whole Church had the opportunity of forming a judgment on the subject, it pronounced in favour of the canonical books. The Epistle to the Hebrews was doubted by the West, and the Apocalypse by the East, only while those portions of the Church investigated separately from each other, only till they compared notes, interchanged sentiments, and formed a united judgment. The phrase must mean this, because, from the nature of the case, it can mean nothing else." I say that this solution affords no satisfaction to my mind, because, though I believe it to be true as concerns the Epistles of St. James, St. Jude, the 2d of St. Peter, and 2d and 3d of St. John, that the doubt concerning them was yielded at once upon some such interchange of sentiment as is here spoken of, and lasted so short a time as hardly to deserve notice: yet, in respect to the Hebrews and Revelations, I see not how the allegations on which the solution rests can be maintained. For first, it was not only in the East that the Revelations was doubted of, the first person recorded as impugning it, being Caius, a Roman presbyter; and next, it seems strange to assert, that it was for want of conference between the East and West that the doubt continued, seeing that the doubt continued during the whole of the fourth century, during which the general councils of Nice and Constantinople were held, and constant intercourse was kept up between the East and West.



3dly, the Article does not say "*by* the Church," which this solution seems to require, but "*in* the Church." How then is the difficulty to be avoided? Simply by taking the sentence in the very strictest sense of its words, affirmative but not exclusive. The sentence does not say, as it seems at first to mean, we receive these and no others; but simply affirms we do receive these: *i. e.* as if it should have said, "In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand (in the first place), those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church:" which is perfectly consistent with stating, when it comes to treat of the New Testament, that, as regards it, all the books *commonly* received are to be received and accounted canonical.

The other instance I would name, occurs in the 21st Article; where it is affirmed, "General councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes." On which Mr. Newman remarks, "That great bodies of men of different countries may not meet together without the sanction of their rulers, is plain from the principles of civil obedience, and from primitive practice." He receives the affirmation according to its first and most obvious meaning, namely, as asserting a principle, and finds no difficulty in admitting it, assuming that the bodies of men must be "great," and assembled from "different countries." But the bodies assembled need not be great; for one representative from each national Church, might, if the Church were

willing, suffice for a general council ; and, at that rate, even with Christianity as it is, the number would not be great : and again, the Church, before our Saviour's return, may, even yet, be reduced to one country : and its bishops be reduced to so few, that even a score or a dozen of the inhabitants of the same country might constitute a general council in the fullest sense of the words : yet, even these, if the Article is to be received as affirming a principle, must not meet together to consult for the preservation of the Church, without the command of the prince, who might be a heathen, rejoicing in the prospect of its extinction. I confess, if it were necessary to understand the Article in this sense, I durst not affirm it to be true, but must needs consider it profane and impious, and anti-Christian. For if the principle be true, it must needs apply to provincial councils, as well as to general ones, and then all the councils held by the Christians before the conversion of Constantine, not one of which was assembled at the command of a prince, must be condemned as wicked. This is fearful enough ; but when it is considered that the first general council upon record, the only one truly so called, was that of the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem ; this also, seeing it had no prince's command to allege, must fall under the same condemnation. How, then, is the difficulty to be avoided ? Simply by abiding by the strict letter of the Article, and closely weighing the words employed in it ; when we discover that the word " may," had in the sixteenth century a force which is now obsolete,

expressive not of right but of power: consequently that the Article does not assert a principle, but merely affirms a fact: not meaning to say that councils *ought* not to assemble without the will of princes, but merely that they *cannot*; which of course is true, the civil power having force to prevent them if it should think fit.

Now I think it probable that many will think this merely another instance of that evasion which they have so liberally charged upon Mr. Newman; and, certainly, if we had only the English words to deal with, it would not be in my power to do more than show that such a meaning was possible. Happily, however, the Latin comes to my aid, and declares that it is the actual meaning which the framers of the Articles intended to express: "*Generalia concilia sine jussu et voluntate principum congregari non possunt.*" Had the framers of the Articles intended to affirm a principle, it appears from a comparison of many of the Articles (20, 23, 26, 32, and others) that the term used would probably have been "*non licet.*" Perhaps this instance may lead some people to think that there is some danger in hasty judgment.

In conclusion, I think I owe it to myself to declare, that in making with my friends the united effort in defence of the Church, from whence the publication of the "Tracts for the Times" arose<sup>1</sup>, my

<sup>1</sup> The friends to whom I allude are, the Rev. R. H. Froude (since dead), the Rev. J. Keble, the Rev. J. H. Newman, and another. The time, when the effort spoken of was agreed by us to be made, was in 1833. The occasion of making it arose from

sole object was simply to defend those fundamental principles upon which the primitive and catholic Church rested for seven hundred years; upon which the Reformers of our Church professed to effect her cleansing; and which they have consigned to us for our direction; by which only (I believe) can Catholic Truth be defended, and Christian Liberty secured, and the ultimate restoration of the whole Church to one communion be ever brought about : but which, through some strange laxity of education, to the infinite hazard of our Church and our religion, had become confounded in men's minds with those very corruptions, against which, as well as against the still more fearful dangers in a contrary direction, they afford, under the Divine Blessing, the only reasonable and intelligible safeguard.

the violence at that time perpetrated in part (*e. g.* in the destruction of the Ten Bishoprics), and still more fearfully threatened (in the proposed Parliamentary alterations of the Liturgy), not merely against the constitutional privileges of the clergy, as one of the estates of the realm, but against the fundamental principles of the religion which we profess as members of the Church of Christ. The two principles, which, with all their just and legitimate consequences, formed the written and acknowledged basis of our united effort, were simply these : a firm maintenance of the Apostolical Succession ; and a resolution to preserve the integrity of Christian doctrine in our Prayer Book. The whole of the communications which I received from my friends upon the subject will be found in the Irish Ecclesiastical Journal, No. 7.



## P O S T S C R I P T.

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SINCE writing the above, I have seen Mr. Newman's letter to Dr. Jelf, in which there are two points which I feel that I ought not to pass unnoticed. I cannot read without remonstrance what he says concerning the Church of Rome, namely, that "She alone, amid all the errors and evils of her practical system, has given free scope to the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other feelings, which may be especially called catholic:" nor do otherwise than express my surprise at the (apparently) strange inconsistency of his ascribing this to the Church of Rome, when that Church is involved (in all, or almost all, of the twelve articles of Pope Pius' Creed) in that very fault from which he has been seeking to vindicate the Articles of the Church of England, namely, in wholesale condemnation of the Church of Christ for the first seven centuries. As to the "scope for the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness," which may be, I

suppose, expressed in one word—true piety; I believe it to be utter delusion to imagine, that there is more scope for the development of them in the Church of Rome than in the Church of England. I believe that for the fullest development of them within the Church of England by every layman of her communion, no more is wanted than the moral courage to live above the world while they live in it, which must ever be required of the children of God in this world of trial. And so far am I from believing that this is more easy in the Church of Rome than in the Church of England, that, on the contrary, my firm conviction is, that it requires more moral courage in a clergyman of that Church to attain to it, than it does for a layman of our own, and that without taking into account the awful impieties in the celebration of Divine Service, of which those Clergy are guilty.

The other point to which I allude is, where he speaks of some persons as apparently contemplating either “joining the Church of Rome,” or “withdrawing from the Church as established;” and that only in the language of regret, without one word of reproof. Here, again, I must speak plainly, and feel confident that I shall have his approval, when I declare my opinion to be, that, even if the Articles of the Church of England were as condemnatory of the primitive Christians as the Creed of Pope Pius is, still this would afford neither warrant nor excuse for separation from her communion, unless it were at-

tempted to force them upon all men as terms of communion, which has been done in the latter case. If persons shall succeed, as many at the present moment inconsiderately seem attempting, namely, in obliging the Clergy of the Church of England, in subscribing to her Articles, to subscribe to a condemnation of the Church of earlier and better times, the light of whose guidance and example her Reformers not only held out to the admiration of the Clergy, but instructed the Clergy in the Homilies, to hold out to the admiration of the people, then, indeed, I think many would agree with me in considering that we could no longer continue in the *ministry* of the Church; but this would afford us no ground for leaving her *communion*, so long as she did not require this as a term of communion. It seems to me, that one of Noah's sons might with equal piety and safety have thrown himself into the wild waters of the Deluge, if Noah had ordered the ark otherwise than to his mind; as members of the Church of England plunge into the waste of schism, so long as the bread of life and the cup of salvation may be obtained by them without sin in her pale, at the hands of those whom the Lord has commissioned to administer them. Let men well and deeply consider this, that, although the impious ministration of the offices of religion on the part of Nadab and Abihu was such, that God struck them dead, yet not a hair of the head perished from any one of the people of Israel, who had been, indeed, as we must



needs conclude, witnesses of the impiety, but had not in act or deed consented to it. But that when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, taking, not improbably, perverse occasion from this, rose in rebellion against the priesthood, they, and every soul who joined himself to them, perished from the congregation of the Lord. From which we may draw two conclusions: first, that the sins of the rulers of a Church will not be imputed to or exacted of the people, unless they have by act or deed consented to them: secondly, that rebellion against those rulers has been more fearfully punished by God than any other sin. It is upon the strength of the case of Nadab and Abihu, that I have cherished and expressed the hope, (which has called forth torrents of abuse,) that if consent to the Romish errors were not implied and understood as the term of communion in that Church, a man who in Romish countries should seek Communion there, need not fear that the deprivation of the cup would be imputed to him as sin; if he himself were willing to receive the cup, and did not consent to, but merely endured, the withholding of it by the priests, who seem to me, in this matter at least, to be treading in the fearful footsteps of Nadab and Abihu. It is upon the strength of the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, that I have ever felt it my duty to take every occasion of witnessing against the guilt of separation, the doing of which has in like manner subjected me to reproach, especially from the Master of the Temple, not against me by name, but

against one of the "Tracts for the Times" which I had written : he apparently not being aware, as neither was I myself when I wrote the Tract, that in applying the case of Korah to the Dissenters who have taken upon themselves the exercise of the office of the Christian priesthood, without any ostensible commission from God, and in open defiance of the rulers of the Church, I was only doing what Wesley himself had done, when by the terror of that example he sought to deter his followers from involving themselves in such a sin.

But if, as some have dared to urge, the Church of England should follow, not in part, but wholly, the example of the Church of Rome, and both put such a construction upon her Articles as should condemn the Church of Christ in her purest days, and also urge a consent to such condemnation as a term of communion, and cast forth out of her bosom, as Rome has done, all her children who should refuse consent to such schismatical impiety, then indeed I conceive that a man would have no choice but to take his stand with Elijah, though he actually were, what Elijah only fancied himself to be, alone in the world. But God forbid that I should contemplate it, even as a possibility, that the rulers of the Church of England should ever be so far forsaken of God as to adopt either of these courses.

If there be one thing more clear than another, it is this, that the framers of the Articles of the Church of England never intended to condemn any opinion or

practice which had been generally received and unreproved in the Church of the first seven centuries; and that if in anything they have seemed to express themselves otherwise, it was most contrary to their intention, and would have been utterly repudiated by them: so that if in any Article such condemnation seems to be expressed, it is to be understood of the abuse, and not of the legitimate use, of the thing so spoken of; and that to endeavour, from the mere wording of their Articles, which they are no longer alive to explain, to fasten such a reproach upon them, is a violation of the spirit for the sake of the letter, which would not be endured in laws temporal, and therefore ought not to be urged in those which are ecclesiastical, especially when affecting liberty, as is the case with the Articles.

But whilst urging this, I must needs remark, that Mr. Newman, in his Tract 90, speaks something of a primitive doctrine of purgatory, and of image-worship. May I ask him to be more explicit, and say what the nature and extent of that doctrine was, and by whom maintained, and whether it passed unreproved in the Church? He will hardly, I think, contend that the speculation of one or two individuals on the *possibility* of purgatory, which is all that Jerome and Bede had attained to, is sufficient to constitute a primitive doctrine, especially when we have the contrary testimony of Epiphanius, that *ψυχῶν κάθαρσις* was one of the heretical peculiarities of Simon Magus. Nor can he venture to assert, that the worship of images

was unreprieved in the primitive Church, while the writings of so many of the ancients testify in what utter detestation they held it, *colere*, or σίβειν, or προσκυνεῖν, anything of the sort. Has he forgotten that Irenæus and Epiphanius both agree in ascribing the introduction of images into Christian worship, to the Carpocratian heretics, while Eusebius regarded it as a mere heathenish custom (ἑθνικὴ συνήθεια)<sup>1</sup>? Or does he mean to deny to the Church of England now the liberty which she exercised in the eighth century, of condemning that which Hoveden declares to have been execrated by the whole Church of God; and which the great Council of Francfort agreed in utterly (*omnimodis*) rejecting and condemning?

As a general principle, I am sure I shall have his concurrence in this: namely, that while, on the one hand, no man needs excuse for approving any opinion or practice which was unreprieved in the primitive Church; so neither does he for condemning any practice or opinion which can be shown to have been openly, and without reproof, condemned in that same Church.

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. Hist. vii. 18.

THE END.

